



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

OUR STREET.

THE rapidity of modern progress in all the arts of social life is nowhere more strikingly visible than in England. Our states and institutions being of comparatively modern origin, we have less opportunity of marking the strides of improvement, though the rate at which we advance is unquestionably far more speedy. To see the contrast between old times and the present to advantage, we must have recourse to the old country. In nothing is this contrast more perceptible than in the aspect of the streets and general habits of business in old market-towns, such as that which forms the subject of the following sketch.

of linen and woollen drapery, stationery, and drugs. Occasionally they acted as physicians or apothecaries, and prepared the only cattle medicines that could be procured in the neighbourhood. They kept the post-office, and distributed stamps, were agents for a life and fire insurance company, and transacted business on behalf of the country bank. Yet their premises were not large, nor their stock-in-trade extensive. The windows of the shop, which projected considerably over the narrow pavement, were supported on wooden posts, and elevated to a level with the vision of a full-grown person. The pane of glass, of modest dimensions, were surrounded by



THE OLD SHOP IN OUR STREET.

Onslow and Son's was the only shop in our street. It was a very ancient-looking shop, and the oldest person in the parish could not remember that any other establishment had ever existed in the same locality. For three generations, at least, the firm of Onslow and Son had flourished, without the slightest opposition. As an older Onslow died, he was succeeded by Son, and, in like manner, a younger member of the family was advanced to take his position as second in the firm. In this manner they went on, without supposing that any change could ever possibly affect their condition.

It would be difficult to describe the exact calling or profession of the members of this firm. They dealt in all kinds

strong, solid-looking frames, an inch and half in thickness. In those days it was not deemed necessary daily to exhibit a fresh assortment of goods, as the means of attracting stray customers. Onslow and Son supplied all that was wanted in the neighbourhood, so that any such labour on their part would have been expended to no purpose. Once or twice a-year the business of their establishment was almost entirely suspended, in order that a thorough cleansing and "putting to rights" might be accomplished. This being done, the same faded ensigns of the trade were restored to their former place, in the same order as they had maintained during the greater part of a century. The door was several steps above

the level of the street, and was usually closed, which gave to the whole establishment an exclusive and uninviting aspect.

On the entrance of any one into the shop, Mr. Onslow or Son generally looked through a small window, which communicated with the little back parlour; and having finished his tea, or satisfied himself concerning the correctness of a bill, or discharged any other duty in which he might happen to be engaged, he would at length come forward, and desire the waiting customer to say what was wanted. Now it sometimes happened, that amidst the multiplicity of their wares the principals themselves were uncertain whether the article on demand was amongst the number.

"I believe," the shopkeeper would sometimes say, "that I have somewhere that which you desire. I've a faint recollection that there's something of the sort on one of those upper shelves."

Accordingly, a parcel was brought down from its hiding-place, but its contents were not the goods in request; so the package was deliberately re-corded, and safely lodged in its former position, before another search could be made. After several unsuccessful attempts, the right parcel was at last found, and the customer having taken a portion, at a price which awarded Onslow and Son a profit of 50 per cent., the remainder was again deposited on the upper shelf, to rest undisturbed for one, three, or seven years, as future circumstances might determine. Onslow and Son never asked their customers if they wanted anything more. They never used any power of persuasion to induce a fair visitor to increase the number of her purchases, by exhibiting to her some recently imported goods of the latest fashion, or by informing her that some new article was found to be exceedingly useful in domestic arrangements. They regarded a commercial transaction in the light of a mutual accommodation. They believed that the wares they had to sell were good, but were by no means prepared to pledge themselves that the world could produce no better; as they purchased, their customers were welcome to buy again, with the understanding that the sellers were not losers by the bargain.

Onslow and Son seemed to pride themselves that they could perform the least amount of labour in the longest given time. Their shop was open from six in the morning till ten at night. Everything was managed in a quiet, methodical manner, as though the chief aim of a tradesman was not the amount of work he could accomplish, but the number of hours he could manage to keep himself occupied. Had any one hinted to Mr. Onslow that he might have discharged double the amount of business, and have had full five hours a-day for exercise and instruction, he would have been plainly told that the best exercise for a man of business is his work, that a knowledge of reading, writing, and accounts is all that he requires; and as for Cassell's "Popular Educator," it would have been Mr. Onslow's decided opinion that it was only calculated to bring young men to poverty and ruin. The good man would have chuckled at the idea of a grocer learning Latin and French, or of a draper's assistant becoming master of the problems of Euclid. He would have deemed a voyage to the moon quite as probable as a monster trip to the Great Exhibition.

Things went on in such an established and regular manner in our street, that no one ever thought of any change. In the course of time, however, a circumstance occurred, the result of which was an entire topo-revolution. This was no other than the death of Miss Dorothy Bragge, an elderly lady, who lived opposite to the establishment of Onslow and Son. As soon as the funeral was over, the quiet, unobtrusive-looking dwelling, lately occupied by that lady, was "to let." Everybody wondered for a while whether the executors would be likely to find a tenant who would consent to be imprisoned in the same manner as Miss Bragge and her single domestic. Time, however, rolled on, and the empty house was almost forgotten, till one morning a number of joiners and bricklayers were seen to enter the premises, who, by their proceedings, were intent on making some considerable alterations. They delibe-

rately proceeded to remove the window which had formerly afforded light to Miss Bragge's parlour; they then tore away the wall from the whole front, as high as the second floor, removed the partitions which had separated the parlour from the passage and the kitchen at the back, so that the entire suite of apartments on the ground floor was thrown open to the gaze of the public. The floor was scrupulously made level with the street, a commodious window of plate-glass was soon fixed, a long line of counters was arranged through the entire length of the shop—for a shop it was now about to become. Two dozen highly varnished canisters, the first numbered 12 and the last 36, were soon placed in regular order. Vast heaps of tea and sugar appeared to have been thrown into the window as samples, as if the shopman had just emptied a chest of the one and a barrel of the other, and thought nothing of them in a concern so extensive and magnificent. In the evening, a strong glare of gas-light forcibly arrested the attention of the passers-by; whilst invitations, printed in large characters, were adroitly placed in the window, strongly advising the reader to purchase a certain full-flavoured black tea, at four shillings per lb., or informing him that the finest fresh-roasted coffee was to be purchased at two. Spices were profusely scattered about, large bunches of grapes were temptingly suspended, Portuguese onions peeped slyly from their bursting boxes, whilst oranges and lemons were so plentiful, one might have imagined that they grew in the neighbourhood. Within the shop every one was busy, even if there happened to be no customers waiting: one weighed and folded the articles which were likely to be soon required; another was unpacking or clearing away the goods which had just arrived; a third was seated at the desk, making entries in a book which appeared large enough to have kept the accounts of the nation. The whole scene was one of activity and despatch.

This change, so entirely new in our street, was brought about by Tom Widdaker, late apprentice in the firm of Onslow and Son, who, on the fulfilment of his indentures, had repaired to London, where he obtained a situation, and remained during five years as assistant in one of the largest metropolitan establishments. On the death of his father, Widdaker became possessed of £1,500; with this sum, and £150 which he had saved in London (N.B.—his evenings were usually spent in Southampton-buildings), he started business in the manner we have described, and ventured to oppose his late master, whose capital was known to be at least £12,000.

The walls of our town, and every available space in the surrounding villages, were covered with large placards, setting forth that "T. Widdaker, having direct communication with the merchants of Hong Kong and the West Indies, and by means of an immense capital invested in trade, was enabled to supply the public with Tea and Coffee, much superior to those of any other house, and at exceedingly reduced prices."

When the first feelings of surprise and astonishment had passed from the mind of every individual connected with the firm of Onslow and Son, the senior partner affected pity for what he considered the rash behaviour of his late apprentice; for that Widdaker would soon be ruined, Mr. Onslow did not entertain the shadow of a doubt.

"Who will believe his puffing advertisements?" said Onslow to Son; "and as for his capital, we shall soon see how far that can support such an extravagant outlay."

Now, although few persons believed that Widdaker had direct communication with the Hong Kong merchants, or that his capital was much beyond its actual value, the great bulk of the customers in our street soon began to resort to the "new shop." Many persons were of opinion that the tea and coffee purchased there were superior in flavour and quality to those of Mr. Onslow, and every one knew that the younger trader was content with more moderate profits. The *élite* of the parish were pleased by the promptitude and attention with which they were served, and the poor were influenced by the civility and politeness with which their custom was acknowledged. Thus the new shop continued to prosper.

Onslow and Son were obliged to acknowledge that Widdaker

daker's term of existence as a shopkeeper in our street was likely to prove longer than they had at first anticipated; but they still persisted in the belief that his ruin was only put off for a season, and that the longer the event was postponed, the more fatal would be the catastrophe. In the mean time, as their drapery and drug business was not affected, it was sufficient to support them till the former state of things should be restored. But, alas! when changes have begun, who can say where matters will end? In a few months Browne opened a draper's shop in our street, on a similar scale to that of Widdaker; and Robinson started regular as a druggist. Onslow and Son, however, still continued to believe that theirs would again become the only shop in the neighbourhood, and that these upstarts would soon vanish.

In process of time the young tradesmen married, and were surrounded by families, and still, to the astonishment of the Onslows, continued to manifest all the outer signs of men in easy circumstances. Widdaker was chosen to serve the office of mayor; Browne was elected churchwarden; and Robinson's ruin seemed to be as distant as ever.

At length, as the early-closing system was adopted in our street by all except the firm of Onslow and Son, a meeting of the inhabitants was called, to consider the propriety of establishing a literary institution, to which all parties, principals, assistants, and apprentices, might repair after business hours, for rational amusement and instruction. The object was approved of, and it was resolved that a site should immediately be sought out, on which to erect a hall for the purpose.

On the evening of that day, Onslow and Son settled their last transaction as members of a commercial firm.

"Sam," said Onslow to Son, "the world is gone mad. The sooner we are out of business the better. In a quiet cottage in the country we may, at least, live in peace."

A few weeks later, Onslow and Son deserted the home of their fathers, on which the "Athenæum" is now erected. But although seven years have passed away since that event, it is still the unalterable opinion of George Onslow, Esq., of Broom Cottage, that we are on the eve of a revolution, a national bankruptcy, or a foreign invasion, and that these calamities are mainly owing to such changes as have been wrought by the hand of Time in the condition of our street.

ORNAMENTATION OF METALS.

A PAPER was read a short time ago before the London Society of Arts, on the above interesting subject, by Mr. W. C. Aitken, of Birmingham. After an elaborate examination of the æsthetic principles of the Greeks, Mr. Aitken glanced at the European works of the middle ages, and rapidly contrasted the advantages afforded by machinery with the laborious and sometimes cumbrous processes of the hand-labour then unavoidably employed. He next traced the history of the various processes employed by metal-workers, such as casting, stamping, beating, *repoussé*, engraving, chasing, and electro-deposition; and, after explaining the cognate arts of die-sinking and machine-cutting, proceeded to notice in detail a new method of ornamentation now being very successfully worked. He observed—"Permit me now to direct your attention to a process which has recently been introduced, with what success the specimens displayed before you will enable you to judge. The merit and chief recommendation of the invention is its very great simplicity,—the ease, speed, and facility with which the effect of a reticulated surface, an elaborated, chased, or an elegant scroll or floriated design, apparently engraved, may be introduced on any object. The fact of a soft material imprinting upon a harder one an impress of its form has long been understood; its practical application to the production of ornamental designs upon metal is, however, of but recent origin. The practical application of the process is due to Mr. R. F. Sturges, of Birmingham, who, in connexion with Mr. R. W. Winfield, of the same town, is

proprietor of the patent. The origin of the invention may be traced to the competitive spirit of trade which operates with so much effect upon the manufacturing industry of our country, calling into action the inventive faculty to devise new and more economic methods of effecting certain results. The idea once originated, it is singular to trace its gradual development. In its early stage it was imagined that the harder the material out of which the pattern or design was made, the better for the purpose. Keeping this then imagined requisite in view, the first ornament imprinted was made out of steel wire formed into shape, and thereafter tempered; designs of a more complicated and minute character it was expected could be produced by using metallic lace or wire web."—This did not succeed, and thread lace was then employed, and successfully; a perfect impression being obtained, under a pressure of ten tons, on copper, brass, German silver, iron, and, more wonderful still, even on steel. The patentees then used perforated paper, which produced an equal or even better effect.—"But by far the most useful practical application of the inventor was yet in store; and, in economy of its reproductive powers, it bears a near relation to the multiplication of the duplicate steel plates from which the Bank of England notes are printed, and which are produced by pressure, in the first instance, from one original engraved plate; or to the production of the plates from which our ordinary penny postage-stamps are printed, the original of which, up to 1842, had been only once engraved. The reproduction in the two instances last mentioned is effected by means of steel rollers, the periphery of which, by pressure on the original plate, has received an impression of the engraving in relief, and which when hardened impresses upon the surface of a soft steel plate a fac-simile of the original. The plan adopted in the present instance, and applied to the ornamentation of metal, is somewhat similar. A steel plate very equal in thickness is selected, on which the design requisite for the ornamentation of the salver, tray, or other object, is engraved in the ordinary manner, but somewhat deeper, the point of the graver employed to cut the lines being ground more *acuté*. The engraving must be carefully executed; erasures or scrapings out, or beatings up of the plate from behind, must be avoided, as where they occur they are detrimental to the appearance and uniformity of the work. The least departure from perfect flatness of surface or equality of thickness is fatal to the perfection of the impression. From this plate a matrix or impression is taken in German silver, steel, or other metal, by passing the plate to be used as the matrix, and the engraved plate or design to be copied from, through a pair of rolls, observing, however, that the pressure of the rolls is uniform all over the surface, or, in technical language, that the 'pinch' is equal. If this has been the case, and if the pressure applied has been sufficient, the result will be, that upon the previously blank sheet of metal an impression, with elevated or projecting portions corresponding to the sunk lines in the engraved or chased original plate, will follow. This impression is then used as the medium from which to obtain the ornamental blank thereafter to be made up. This is done, as in the former instance, by placing the sheet of metal to be ornamented with its face to the plate with the raised or projecting portions, and passing them through the rolls as before; the consequence is, that every line of the original design will be found impressed or indented into the previously plain sheet or blank of metal. The original steel plate is thus used only for the preparation of reverses, one of which, however, may be used many times in succession, or in proportion to the hardness of the metal to be ornamented. The blanks, after being ornamented, may be stamped, or spun up into shape; if of a globular or regular form of outline, if irregular, hexagon, octagon, or with bosses, the metal out of which the vessel or article is formed is ornamented in separate portions, which are thereafter bent, stamped, or raised into shape, fitted and soldered together. After trimming and dressing, the plating or silvering is effected by the electro-deposit process; burnishing follows, the tools employed being burnishers made of blood-stone."